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THE
Conspiracie of the Wicked against the Just.
LAID OPEN IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED
At Eyke in Suffolk, Jan. 23. Anno Dom. 1647.

BY ZEPH. SMYTH. *K*

**Preached and published, to set forth the grounds
why the wicked lay such Crimes to the charge of
Gods people, as they are cleare of.**

*And they said, Come let us imagine some device against Jeremiah; for
Law shall not perish from the Priest, nor Counsell from the wise, nor
the word from the Prophet; Come, Let us smite him with the tongue,
Jer. 18. 12.*

*And also they being idle, they learne to goe about from house to house,
yea, they are not onely idle, but praters and buse bodies, speaking
things which are not comely, 1. Tim. 5. 13.*

*For they incourage themselves in a wicked purpose, they commune of
laying snares privily, and say who shall see them; they search out
Iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search, the inward thought of
every one of them and the heart is deep; but God will shoot an ar-
row at them suddainly, their stroke shall be at once: they shall cause
their owne tongues to fall upon them. Psal. 64. 5, 6, 7, 8.*

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*London, Printed by THO: FORCET for Iohn Rothwell, living in Pauls-Church-yard,
and are to be sold at his shop at the signe of the Sun and Fountaine,
in the yeare, 1648.*

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To all the Orthodox Christians, that are
 followers of the Lord Iesus Christ in sincerity,
 of the Towne of *Wickam-Market*, in *Suffolk* ; *ZEPH: SMYTH* wishes the increase
 of grace here, and the fruition of glory hereafter.



Friends, the most wise God, who knowes what is best for his people, hath so ordered, that his people shall undergoe bad report as well as good: for the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Members above the Head; It was the Portion of Iesus Christ, and therefore well may befall his followers; The wicked will watch for occasions against the godly to make them odious; hoping to justify themselves by charging others with such crimes, as they are guilty of themselves. If they have any just occasion given them, through the failings of any of Gods people, or the discovery of any false hearted Hypocrite, How do they joy at it; If they have not just occasion: they will charge them with things that they are cleare of; The grounds why they doe it, you may please to reade in the ensuing Sermon; which though I have passed the bounds of modestie, to make thus publicke in these Times, in
 C² *which*

To the Christian READER.

which the stomacks of men are so full, that they loath the honey-combe, and the word of the Lord as a reproach and derision daily; yet I have divers Reasons for it, which I crave leave to conceale; Sure I am, it is a Doctrine suitable to the times, to be both Preached and printed; It concernes that sinne which cries to Heaven for vengeance; and is a great cause of our Lands trouble; It is true, I have put it forth unpolished, as it was delivered unto a plaine Auditorie; and though not so large as it was delivered publiquely; yet here is the summe of it in brieft; if any in the perusing of it expect high straines, and strong lines, and the words which man's wisdom teaches, for such I have laboured in vaine; If it find hard entertainments amongst them which have curious Pallats; If I should please men, I were not the servant of Christ; if it bee hated amongst liars and slanderours, it is no wonder; For he that doth evill hateth the light, Ioh. 3. 20. If any mislike Iesus Christ or his followers the worse, because they are reproached in the world; Such as refuse Christ Iesue, because of a face buffeted and spit upon, may want of a Saviour and perish miserable; For all that will live godly in Christ Iesus must suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12. And through many tribulations enter into the Kingdome of God. But if this plaine Sermon may but learne any poore soule a piece of Heaven, even any thing of the good old way I am satisfied; I commit the successe to God, and present these lines to you, with my earnest desire and prayer to God for you, that you may be saved, though the weakest, and most unworthy of all the servants of Iesus Christ.

ZEPH. SMYTH.



The Malignants Plot.

OR,

The Conspiracy of the Wicked against the Just.

PSAL. 35. patt 11.th verse.

They layd to my Charge things that I knew not.



This Psalm was a Psalm of *David* whom though hee were a man according to Gods owne heart and walked close with God; yet hee was a man of much troubles in this life and oft in great dangers; and as Gods providence doth not free his People from trouble but preserves them in all their troubles; so did God preserve this servant of his in the midst of all his troubles; and as God will be sought for that which he promiseth unto his people; so the Prophet *David* doth not in his trou-

ble sit still and neglect the use of the meanes, saying, GOD hath promised deliverance and hee will deliver whether I use the meanes or no; but the Prophet uses the meanes, hee seeks unto God in his troubles; the Prophet was in great straits at this time when he put up this Prayer unto God, exprest in this Psalm, by reason of *Saul* and all that tooke part with him, did furiously persecute *David*, digging Pits and laying snares for him without a cause; and the Prophet in this Psalm makes his cause knowne to God intreating the Lord to plead his Cause and let his enemies fall into the Pit they digged for him.

And the Prophet in making his mone to God, complains to God of their Cruelty in seeking his woe by bearing false witness against him, as doth appear in the Text, False witnesses did rise up against mee they layd to my charge things that I knew not.

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Whether we read the words, They asked of mee things I knew not; or according to the translation, They layd to my charge, it beares all one sense, and therefore I intend not to spend time about that but hasten to the matter — The words beare this sense, *Dauids* enemies did out of cruelty and malice against him intending him mischiefe, charge him with such things as hee never did, things that he was cleare of; the words then holding forth a Crime charged upon the Prophet they afford these Considerations; First, the person charged with the Crime, *David*. Secondly, the persons charging him, Cruell witnesses, false witnesses. Thirdly, the Crime, though it is not specified what things in particular but in generall, things which imply severall though such things as they thought to have prevailed with against *David*. Fourthly, *Dauids* innocency, things that I knew not.

My Doctrine I intend to inferre upon from the words for the present, is this; *David*. That it is many times the portion of the godly in this life to have such Crimes layd to their charge by their Enemies as they are cleare of.

My method in handling of the Doctrine, God assisting, shall be this. First, to prove the truth of the Doctrine by Scripture. Secondly, to shew you the grounds from whence it arises. Thirdly, why God doth permit it; and fourthly, make application.

The truth of the Doctrine you see plains in the Text, and as in the text so the Prophet hath many expressions to this purpose in the Psalmes, see *Psal.* 41. Fifthly, my enemies speake evill of mee, saying, *When shall he dye and his name perish.* *Dauids* enemies were so bitter against him, that they speake evill of him with the tongue, and nothing would satisfie them but his life; when shall hee dye and his name perish. *Vers.* 8. If hee come to speake with me he flatters but in his heart, he heapeth Iniquity, and when he comes abroad hee tells it forth; when they come to the Prophet, then they flatter as if they would comfort him and bemoane his Condition; but hated him in the heart, and looke what they in their hearts did imagine of the Prophet that they tell abroad for truth; so see *Psal.* 109. 3. They compassed mee about, saith the Prophet, with words of hatred, and sought against mee without a Cause, what words were these living words as appeare, *vers.* 4. There was malice in the heart and it ventred at the Tongue; when there is malice in the heart of a Man or Woman, then they plot which way to make their neighbour odious, though without cause; And as this was *Dauids* Portion, so it was *Jobs* also when his three Friends came to comfort him, in stead of Comforting of him, they Iudge him and Charge him of that which hee was cleare of, as *Iob* 22. 5. *Is not thine Iniquity great,* say they, as if they should have said, Thou art a great sinner and now God hath met with thee, it is thy Sinne have brought this upon thee and now God layes open thy hypocrisie; But they Charged him falsely, for God did it to him; and as it was *Jobs* Portion, so *Jeremiab* good nor so cor'dice, so *Jerem.* 18. 18. Then they sayd, come let us imagine some device against *Jeremiab*. The Lord by the Prophet prefigures the ruine of the People, under the parable of the Potters broken vessell; and the Lord threatens to depopulate them, and to take away his Ordinances from them, if they did persist in doing evill in his sight; They were so enraged against the Prophet for this, that they are resolved they will bee revenged on him; then sayd they, Come

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let us imagine some device against *Jeremiah*, for the law shall not perish from the Priest, nor counsell from the Wise, nor the Word from the Prophet, Come let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed unto any of his words; as if they should have said, What does hee threaten us, Come we will make him as bad as wee are, let us slander him, let us falsely accuse him, wee are men of credit, and shall be beleevd whatsoever we say of him; let us smite him with the Tongue, and what followed you may find in Chapter the 20.th. And it hath not onely been the Saints portion to have such things layd to their Charge as they are cleare of; but it befell our Saviour Christ when hee was here upon earth, in *Matth. 8.* in *verse 3.* He was called a Blasphemer in *verse 11.* He was called a friend of Publicans and Sinners, and in *verse 34.* Hee was called a Conjuror; and if the head doe not escape what can the members goe free; no the Disciple saith *CH 11. 7* is not above his Master, did they not call *Iohn Baptist* a Divell, *Math. 11. 18.* I pray see what the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. 6. 8.* Wee saith the Apostle approve our selves to be the Ministers of Iesus Christ by honour and dishonour, by euill report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; in patiently bearing bad report as well as good report, which shew it is the portion of the godly Ministers as well as People to undergoe bad report as well as good, you see the truth of the Doctrine is cleare to mee in the next place to shew you from what grounds this arise, that the Enemies of the godly should Charge them with things they are cleare of.

1. *Reason.* It arises from the godly mans avoyding the way of the Wicked; because others are not as bad as themselves and walke in the same way of Iniquity; that they themselves doe walke in, therefore they are offended at them; this you may see *1 Pet. 4. 4.* They thinke it strange saith the Apostle, that you blame not with them to the same excess of Riot; therefore speake they evill of you, that is the ground from whence it arises; it is a wonder to them, they thinke it strange, as if they should say, What shall none be saved but such as pray, and read and run after Sermons, and are so exact in their lives as such and such are; What not allow us now and then to sweare an Oath, now and then to tell a lye, now and then to be Drunke, now and then to play the good fellow; nay are they so strickt wee will smite them with the Tongue; wee are resolved we will make them more odious then they make us; and the ground of it is, because they have the way of a godly man. The Prophet *Dauid* expression is, They that reward mee evill for good are my Adversaries; because I follow goodnesse, *Psal. 38. 20.* That is the ground whence it arises, because I follow goodnesse the wicked doth not so much hate the sinne that they see in a godly man; for they will approve of the same sinne in their Companions; but they are glad if they see any misdemeanour in a child of God that they might reproach them, because they labour after that which is good. And hence it comes to passe, if they see no just cause why they should reproach a child of God, that they will invent something against them; their hearts are so bitter against that of God that they see in them.

A second ground from whence it arises, is the Hypocrisie in the heart; there is so much hypocrisie in the hearts of men and women, what they thinke all is well with themselves, they have no need of Repentance or Reformation of life, they are good Men and Women, and have hearts as good as the best; like the *Pha-*

The Malignant Plot;

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Pharisees, iustifie themselves before men, *Luke* 16. 15. but they are soone ready to judge others, to be very wicked and in a bad case; The ground of their judging and condemning of others is the hypocritic, in their hearts they judge not themselves; the *Pharisees* had a good opinion of themselves, and therefore condemned Christ and his Apostles; this is the Reason why people many times spee a faule in another, it may be where none is, because they cannot spee out their owne, as our Saviour Christ saith, *Mat.* 7. 11. Why seekest thou a moate in thy brothers eye and perceivest not a beame in thy owne; for truly if people would search at home, they would not be so ready to condemne others and iustifie themselves.

A third ground from whence it arises, is the malice and envie in the hearts of people against the godly, if envie be in the hearts of men, unlesse God qualifye them with grace it will vent out; *Saul* envied *David*, and see what plotting there was against him, how was *David* hunted up and downe from place to place; the *Pharisees* envied Christ, and see how it breaks out into action, how did they reproach him; and how oft did they seeke occasion against him; the *Devill* after he was fallen did envie mans happinesse, and never left tempting till he had destroyed the whole race of Mankind; the envious man is not satisfied, unlesse he see his neighbour fall, the *Jewes* envied the Prophet, *Ier.* 18. 18. and they say, Come let us smite him with the tongue; hence it comes to passe, if the Minister of the word touch the Conscience of a naturall man, and touch where it is galled a little, the envie in the mans heart will breake out one way or other.

A fourth ground from whence it arises, is their judging of the godly to be as bad as themselves, there is many in the world like the *Devill*, measures every bodies corne by their owne bushell. You may remember in the first of *Iob*, when the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou not considered my servant *Iob*, there is none like him on the earth, a just and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evill; sayes Satan: What doth *Iob* feare God for nought, hast not thou blessed him with substance, but touch his body and goods and see then if hee blasphemeth thee nor to thy face, the *Devill* knew he was so wicked that he would have done it; and he judges *Iob* to be as bad as himselfe; *Saul* hee did envie *David* in his heart and sought his life, and he judged the same of *David*, called him his enemy, and thought he had sought his life; for many in the world are so wilde, that if they have occasions of sinne offered they doe not resist, and measuring other folke cloath by their owne yard, they thinke others will doe so like wife; hence it comes to passe, that those that are Adulterers and Fornicators themselves, will soonest charge others with it, that are cleare of it, and most commonly they that are most suspicious of the chastity of others are naught themselves, this is one ground of the wicked charging of the godly with such things as they are cleare of, their judging others to be as bad as themselves.

A fifth ground from whence it arises, is the godlies refusing to consent to doe those wicked actions, to which the wicked tempt them, this wee may see in *Ioseph*, *Gen.* 49. 7th. *Ioseph* Mistis urines him to commit filthinesse with her, in the *Scilicet* verse, wee have *Iosephs* refusall, allcadging this reason, How can I doe this great wickednesse, and so sinne against God, a gracious expression, and without

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all question this *Ioseph* had the feare of God before his eyes; but what did follow you may see in the following part of the Chapter, shee would violently have urged *Ioseph* to commit wickednesse with her; gat hold of his garment; but he having the feare of God before his eyes refused, and because hee would not fulfill her wicked desires, she tells her husband, that *Ioseph* came in to lye with her; and shee lift up her voyce and then he fled and got him out; she charged him with that which hee was cleare of, because he did not doe the wicked act to which she tempted him; so she wicked charge the godly many times with such crimes as they are cleare of; because they consent not to doe that to which they are tempted; hence it comes to passe, if a man refuse to be drunke with a company of drunkards; they out of malice will be ready to charge him with drunkennesse; so if hee refuse bad company, and frequent the company of the godly, they will be ready either to charge him with keeping bad company, or gibe at him for holinesse, onely upon this ground the not consenting to those wicked actions to which they are tempted.

A sixth ground from whence it arises, is the desire of wicked persons to have it so, the wicked joy at the fall of Gods people, and they desire such occasions to triumph over them; Let them not saith the Prophet, ah so would wee have it, *Ps* 35. 25. What would they have; they would have occasion to rejoyce over him, they would have had that true which they did falsly charge the Prophet with in the Text; the wicked when they falsly accuse the godly, they shew what they would have; and out of their desire to have it so they watch the steps of the iust; the wicked watcheth the steps and seeketh to slay him, *Ps* 37. 32. That is the end why they watch the steps of the iust, that if it be possible they might slay him, and therefore the Prophet prayes, verse the 19. of this 35. *Psalm*, Let not them that are my enemies unjustly rejoyce over mee; Let them not joy over me, as if I were guilty of that which they charge me with; It implies that the wicked will joy if they have occasion given them; and they are so impudent that they will rejoyce without alfo, as if they had a cause given them; therefore it much behooves a gracious spirit to walke so exact, as the wicked may not have just occasion to rejoyce over them; and to desire of God so to direct them in his way, as they might not occasion the wicked to triumph, in *Ps* 38. 12. saith the Prophet, They that intend mee evill talke wicked things and imagine deceit continually, and in verse the 16. Heare me speedily lest they rejoyce over mee; for when my foot slipeth they magnifie themselves, as if they had said, Lord if thou now dost delay to help, then my enemies will triumph as if thou haddest forsaken mee; for it is their joy, if they see me halt, and to this purpose the Prophet prayes, *Ps* 127. verse 1st. Teach me thy way oh Lord, and lead mee in a right path; because of my observers, who were those observers the Prophets enemies, such as charged him with such things as he knew not, as verse 12. give mee not unto the lusts of my adversaries, for there are falsse witnesses risen up against me, and such as speake cruelly. And truly Gods people had needs pray with *David*, That God would lead them in a right path; for the wicked joy if they doe stumble, and if they doe not stumble and give offence; then because they would have it so they will beare falsse witnesse against them, as if they should say, wee would have it thus, come let us tell it for a truth, whether it be so or no; so that you see one ground.

ground from whence it arises, that the godly are charged with things which they know not is the desire of the wicked to have it so.

A seventh ground whence it arises, is the malice of Satan against the godly, hee will falsly accuse the godly himselve, and he hath not lived five thousand and odder yeares for nothing, but that by this time, may long agoe he taught his scholars some of his cunning; and they through the corruption of their hearts are so tractable to learne the Devils art; that they are very exact in this piece of service to accuse the godly, *and charge them with things that they know not.*

A eighth ground from whence it arises, is rash judgement, the wicked judge all to be as bad as some, and hence it comes to passe if a professor fall into a sinne, they are ready to say of all that professe Christ they are all alike; when David fell, the enemies of God blasphemed not that wicked people hate the sinne, for they can allow the same sinne in themselves they condemn in others; but they are enemies to true Religion, and are glad of any occasion to speake against Religion, saying, this is your Religion and this is your profession; but let mee tell such thus much, that religion that teach men to be wicked is naught, and to be cryed downe; and in some causes a man may justly charge the failings of people upon their religion; as to instance, if I see a *Antinomian* that denies the morall Law to be a rule of life to a believer, swear, lye, slander, neglect holy duties, I may justly say to such, this is your Religion; for if they take away that Law: that forbids swearing, and lying, false witness bearing, and command the true worship of God; then by what Rule shall such people lead their lives; for it is true, the Law is ended to a believer, as a Covenant of workes to seeke righteousness and salvation by the doing of it; but it is not ended as a rule of direction for the well ordering of our lives; so that when such as deny the Law to be a Rule of life live contrary to the Law, I may justly say such a religion, such actions; and thus I might instance concerning divers other Religions; but when a mans religion teaches him nothing but holinesse, to give himselve onely to God, and crie downe all appearance whatsoever, if such a one fall into sinne take heed of charging it upon his religion, for God will not put it up at thy hands; *Ezek. 36. 23.* I will sanctifie my great name amongst the heathen whom yee have polluted; The heathen charged all the wickednesse they see amongst the *Tripes* upon their God and religion; as if they should have said, I warrant they have a good God, and a good religion that they are so wicked; well saith the Lord, are yee so ready to charge all upon mee, and upon religion, I will be even with you, I will before I have done with you make you to know I am the Lord, and that religion teach my people no such things; so say I, you that charge all the failings of professors upon God and upon religion, God will be even with you; and hee will make you know before he have done with you, that the fault is to be charged upon the wickednesse in their hearts and not upon religion; — Suppose God doth now or then discover a hypocrite, or now and then let a deare child of his fall into a sinne, this is not a sufficient argument to fall upon religion, and say, who would be of such a religion, except their religion doe allow them in such actions; then wee must know that all that professe religion are not truly religious; for there are many that preach Christ, and professe Christ, that Iesus Christ will not owne at the last day, *Math. 7. 21.* The stony ground made glorious shew,

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and yet came to nothing, *Math. 13.* And many saith Christ shall seeke to enter in and shall not be able, *Luke 13. 24.* therefore the backslidings of some and falls of some is no argument to prove all are such; for there are some God will keep by his power through faith to salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.*

Objection. But you will say why does God permit wicked people to lay to the charge of the godly such things as they are cleere of, God if hee pleased he could prevent it, and stop the mouthes of the wicked; that they should not be able to speake against his children.

Answer. As all things worke for the best to them that love God, so this worke for the good of Gods people; God doth permit it for the good of his people, and thus he frustrates the hopes of the wicked, they intend evill against the godly, and God disposes of it for good; as *Iosiph* said to his brethien, you intended evill against mee and God disposed of it for good; So may wee say to such as falsly slander Gods people, you intended evill against the people of God, but God disposes of it for good; there is a five fold good that God brings out of it to his people.

First, God doth by this meanes humble them, and brings them to examine what is amisse; so that though they be cleare of that crime laid to their charge, yet they will then examine whether there be nothing else amisse betwixt God and them, they will search their hearts and walke more humble, and cleare more close to the Lord.

Secondly, God doth by this meanes bring them the ofiner upon their knees, to seeke unto him, to plead their cause, and to cleare their innocency; how oft did the Prophet seeke unto God when the wicked did falsly accuse him; how doe hee make his moane at the throne of grace unto God, beseeching him to plead his cause, and to keep him close in his way, that the wicked might not rejoyce at his downefall; so when Gods poeple sees that it is that which the wicked would have; that which is their joy to see the godly fall into such and such a sinne; then the godly will pray more earnestly with *David*, Lord lead mee in a right path because of my observers; then they will be earnest with God to keep them from falling into that sinne that the wicked desire they might fall into, and this is a second good that comes of it.

Thirdly, God doth use the reproach of the wicked as a preventing medicine against that crime which the wicked lay to their charge, the godly have unrenued nature as well as renewed, and if God should leave them never so little to themselves, they are not their owne keepers, they might fall into that sinne which the wicked layes to their charge, and every godly man and woman may say when they are falsly accused, it is Gods mercy that I did not fall into that sinne they lay to their charge; had God left me to my selfe I might have beene guilty of that crime they lay to my charge; and God doth use wicked peoples tongues as a warning against such a sinne; that when they see how the wicked joy at a brat of their owne hateing; then they consider, if the wicked thus joy without a cause, what would they doe if they had just cause; well, by the help of God this shall bee a warning to mee for ever to watch against that sinne; for the time to come I will pray more against that particular sinne than I have done, and watch more against that sinne than I have done, through Gods help they shall never have occasion

to rejoyce over me in that kind; truly I verily believe many a child of God can say by experience, I should never have prayed and watched against such a sinne so much, had not God used the tongues of the wicked as preventing Physick; I know not my owne heart, but that I might have fallen into such and such a sinne, had not God by this meanes hedged up any way with thornes, and this is a third good comes of it.

Fourthly; God doth by this meanes exercise the graces in his people by letting them undergoe bad report as well as good report; hee tries whether they will cleave close to him in all conditions, as *Psalm* 44. 15, 16, 17. Confusion is daily before mee, shame hath covered my face for the voice of the slanderer and rebuker, though all this is come upon us, yet have wee not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsly concerning thy Covenants.

Fifthly, God doth by this meanes teach them how to judge of others, when they are falsly accused for the time to come, they will not receive a false report against their neighbour, they will know the truth of a thing before they believe it, and they know how to comfort others in the like condition; and thus God disposes of it for good, and thus God makes the wicked the servants of his people, in that very thing which the wicked thinke to wrong them most in; for hee uses the wicked as the rod and wispe, to scourge off the rust of their graces, and to correct their securitie; and when the rod hath done its office then it is throwne into the fire; and thus you see how God disposes of the wickedes false accusations of his people for good.

1 Use, It then informes us, that it is no new thing for the people of God to be falsly accused; It was the device of the Devil long agoe to accuse falsly as soone as there was a World, and man was created and placed in Paradise, he accuses God to man by possessing our first parents, that God had not dealt well with them in denying them to eate of the tree of Knowledge, of good and evill; and truly the devill hath not lived five thousand and odde hundred yeares for nothing; but the same devill that at first accused God to man can doe so still, and if hee will accuse God falsly, no marvell if hee teach his schollers to accuse Gods people falsly; Wee find it was *Dauids* portion, *Christs* portion, the *Apostles* portion; and what doe you thinke as the devill growes old hee growes childlike, and forgets how to teach his schollers the same lessons now hee did a great while agoe; so surely, as false accusations have been the portion of Gods people formerly so it may be still, and therefore if such a thing happen, let not Gods people carrie themselves so, as if some strange thing happened to them.

2 Use, It informes us what desperate wickednesse and malice is in the hearts of wicked people against the godly, which appears by their desire to rejoyce over the godly for their infirmities, they watch for occasions, and if they cannot finde occasion, then they will invent something against them; charging them with things which they knowe not, but I leave this and come to a use of instruction, which concerne both the accuser and accused.

First, if it be so that Gods people may be falsly accused, this should reach the people of God these lessons; first, take heed that yee give not the wicked just occasion to rejoyce by not walking as children of the light; for if they watch for occasion, and will falsly accuse without a cause, what would they doe if they had a cause;

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The Malignants Plot.

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maile; seeing they waite for a opportunity, how does it behoove Gods people to walke exactly, as *Col. 4. 5.* Walke wisely towards those that are without, and *Eph. 5. 15.* Take heed yee walke circumspectly, what ever others doe, Yee that are children of the light, yee that are the Lords redeemed ones, take heed that yee walke circumspectly, walke so as yee may not give just occasion to the wicked to open their mouths against religion.

But may some say, though the people of God walke never so exactly, yet the wicked will charge them with things which they know not.

Then first consider, though they doe, yet it will afford the peace of Conscience when the enemy falsly accuse thee; truly it will be very comfortable for a poore soule to say in such a condition: Well, they lay to my charge things that I knew not of.

Secondly, consider it will shame your enemies in time when you walke thus exactly; when they are found lyers and slanderers, and backbiters, then they will be ashamed; and againe thirdly, Such exact walking will in time stop the mouths of wicked people whether they will or no; they shall in time be driven to confesse, well, wee made account to have triumphed over such a one, but now wee see wee are mistaken, as *1 Pet. 2. 15.* By well doing yee put to silence the foolish people; so the people of God by exact walking will in time silence the wicked.

The second thing that this Doctrine should teach the people of God, is how to carrie themselves as they ought under false reports; but you will say, How should a child of God carrie himselfe under false reports, so as hee may not dishonour God in that condition.

I answer, First Gods people should beare reproach patiently, Iesus Christ is a very good patterne for the Saints to imitate in this particular, hee did no wickedness, neither was there any guile found in his mouth, and yet the text saith, *Matth. 8.* That he was called a blasphemer, and a friend of Publicans and sinners, and a Conjuror, and one that calls out Devils by the help of the Devill; and yet our Saviour Christ wee cannot find he answered one word againe; the text saith, When hee was reviled he reviled not againe, when he suffered, hee threatened not but committed it to him that judgeth righteously, *1 Pet. 2. 23.* Hee was delivered him up, *Judas* betrayed him, *Pilate* condemned him, they spit upon him, crowned him with thornes, bare false witness against him, put him to death, and yee hee prays, *Father forgive them they know not what they doe;* So the like wee see in *Stephen*, in *Acts* the sixth. There rose up false witnesses against him; and said they heard him speake blasphemous words against *Moses*, and against God, and yet for all this they beare false witness against him, and in justice condemned him to death, & stoned him with stones; He prayed, Lord lay not this sin to their charge, *Acts 7. 59.* These are good patternes for the Saints to follow in all their reproaches from the wicked; and there are divers motives may be to the godly as encouragements to this dutie of bearing the reproaches of the wicked patiently.

First, no false reports of men can take away Gods love from them, when the wicked have villified them what they can, speake all manner of evill of them to make them odious to others; yet still God loves them, still God saith, Hee that toucheth

toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of his eye, *Zech. 8. 8.* And since thou wert precious in my sight thou wert honourable, and I have loved thee, *Esa. 43. 4.* What a comfort is this unto a child of God, when the wicked have done against them what they can, though they should studie which way to make them as odious as they can, yet all their plotting against them cannot take them out of Gods heart.

Secondly, consider this is a lesse affliction then God may lay upon them; God may trie them with other manner of sufferings then these; as the Apostle saith, *Yee have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sinne;* God may call his people to lay down their lives for Christs sake, and to forsake all enjoyments under Christ, and grace for Christs sake, and the testimony of a good Conscience, and if a godly man cannot beare these lesse afflictions patiently, how shall they beare greater afflictions patiently, as *Jer. 12. 5.* If thou hast runne with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how shalt thou match thy selfe with horses; So if thou canst not beare lesse afflictions patiently, how wilt thou beare greater afflictions patiently. When they bare false witness against *Stephen*, hee did not say as many a ruffian will doe if they bee angered, well, I will be revenged of such a one; I will have his blood for this; no, hee prays, Lord lay not this sinne to their charge; Did he beare false accusation, and death it selfe so patiently, and shall not the godly beare the lesse patiently.

Thirdly, let the godly beare the reproaches of the wicked patiently; because God will one day cleare their innocency, if not in this life yet at the day of judgement, at the farthest, God will not leave them in the hands of the wicked, nor condemne them when the wicked judge them, as *Psal. 37. 33.* Then the godly shall stand and the wicked shall not be able to stand; these considerations may provoke the people of God to beare reproaches patiently.

Secondly, such as would carry themselves aright under false reports must walke humbly; It doth not become a gracious spirit to be proud though they be cleare of that which is laid to their charge, least God should give them up to the will of their enemies; God he teaches the humble, guides the humble, dwells with the humble, and in all conditions it becomes Saints to bee humble, and especially when they lie under reproach.

Thirdly, as humbly, so watchfully; It becomes the godly to make the false accusations of the wicked their warnings. Oh may the soule say! I see what they would have; I see what they would doe if they had just cause; well, I will bee more watchfull against that particular sin.

Fourthly, as watchfully so thankfully; thankfully will you say, What shall I blasse God that I am falsely accused. I answer, thou hast cause to be thankfull in a two-fold respect; First, that God hath kept thee from that sinne they lay to thy charge; alas, if God should leave us never so little to our selves wee doe not know our owne hearts, wee might be as bad as the worst of all. Secondly, there is cause of much thankfulness that God makes the mouths of the wicked as a warning against such, and such a sinne.

Secondly, it is for instruction to all those that are so ready to charge the people of God with things which they are cleare of. Let it teach them to take heed how they falsely accuse any of Gods people; First, consider what a great sinne it is, a

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fin against the 9th. Commandement; Thou shalt not beare false witnesse against thy neighbour. It is a sinne makes a man resemble the Devill, the Devill is called the accuser of the Brethren, this sinne argues a devillish nature, it is such a sinne as plainly discovers there is Murder in the heart.

And know thus much, that God heares all thy reviling of his people, all the secret malice in the heart, and all thy secret speeches against any of Gods children; all is knowne to him, thou wouldst be loth to speak that of thy Neighbour if he were present, that thou dost speake behind his back; but God heard it though thy neighbour did not, and God knowes of all the malice of thy heart, and will one day bring it to light.

And as God knowes it, so he takes it as done to himselfe: Iesus Christ is a fellow sufferer with his people in all their wrongs, in all their afflictions he is afflicted; *Isaiah 63. 9.* And hee that touches you toucheth the apple of his eye, *Zeck. 3. 8.* And if God take the wrongs done to his people as done to himselfe, wee to them that wrong his people.

Secondly, as consider what a great sinne it is, so consider what shame will follow when God cleares the Innocency of his servants; What a shame it will be for people to say, now wee see such and such are liars, slanderers, backbiters, and who would trust them.

Thirdly, consider God will never put it up at your hands, your false accusing of his people, *Psa. 101. 5.* Him that privily slandereth his Neighbour will I destroy. God will be even with them, if they seek to destroy their Neighbour and God he will destroy them.

But may some say; ay, but sometimes we may speake the truth as well as slander them, and what then, shall we hold our peace.

I answer, First it is a great sinne to accuse falsely; and as it is a great sinne to accuse falsely, so in some respect it is a great sinne to speake evill of them, though the things be true they speake of.

As in case the party they speake of be absent, and yet they will speake evill of a man, this is, though the thing be true, backbiting; and see what shall become of such, *Psal. 140. 11.* The backbiter shall not be established upon the earth, such a one may thinke to get up by his neighbours ruines but it will not doe; God hath threatned he shall not be established upon the earth.

Secondly, in case though the thing be true, yet if the parties have been deeply humbled for it, judge themselves for it, lye upon the rack pleading for mercy, and groaning under the burden of it; and is left in a wilderness of sorrow, at such a time to revile them, and abuse them for that which is true, it is a sinne with a witnesse, this is to adde affliction to the afflicted, as *Psal. 69. 26.* They doe persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and adde sorrowes to him whom thou hast wounded; at such a time to speake to the disgrace of another is a sinne with a witnesse.

Thirdly, in case it be a secret friend that they revile, as *Psal. 41. 9.* My familiar friend whom I trusted, which did eat at my table hath lifted up the heele against mee, though the thing should bee true, yet when one pretends friendship and flatter to a mans face, that they might revile him behind his back without suspicion, this discovers the envie in the heart, and aggravates the sinne.

Obj. 2. But some may say, wee may speake any thing, that is true; Shall your precise people doe what they list, and no body shall controule them.

Answer, in so no causes a man may not speake of the failings of a child of God, and in some causes they may speake of their failings?

First, a man hath no ground to speake evill of those things which hee knowes not, in things that wee doe not know are true, and in things that wee doe not know whether ever there were any such thing intended by the parties or no, wee have nothing to doe to condemn them for. I would faine know by what rule, either from the light of nature or grace, a man is to be condemned for things that he knowes not; this is to take Gods place to judge the heart of another, it is God onely that searches the heart; and hee hath reserved it to himselfe to judge the heart; therefore saith Christ, Iudge not that yee be not judged, *Matthew 7. 1.* And God doth severely punish such as take his worke out of his hand; for with what Iudgment: yee judge saith Christ, yee shall be judged, and with what measure yee mete it shall be measured to you againe. God bids us looke to our owne hearts, but he forbids us judging the hearts of others; *1 Cor. 4. 5.* Iudge nothing before the time untill the Lord come who will lighten things that are hid in darkenesse, and if God will doe it, what have any to doe to take his worke out of his hands.

Secondly, the godly are not to be evill spoken of for meere frailties, and infirmities, which either they take little notice of, or else they groome under the burthen of, to speake evill of them, or bring a *odium* upon them for such things, it argues that there is malice in the heart.

Thirdly, the godly are not to be evill spoken of publicly by discovering a secret, when the revealing of it can no way make for Gods glory or the good of others, but rather bring dishonour to God; it doth argue that that man or woman which discovers it, is a slanderer, and malicious in heart against the other partie; for saith the wise man, He that goeth about as a slanderer discovers a secret, but he that is of a faithfull heart concealeth a matter, *Prov. 11. 13.* So they are branded out to be malicious slanderers, unfaithfull; It is a signe of a wicked heart when people are glad of any thing to set upon the stage against a child of God.

Fourthly, the godly are not to be evill spoken of behind their back, for as I told you before, God will not put it up at their hands, the backbiter shall not bee established upon the earth.

Fifthly, the godly are not to be evill spoken of for their goodnesse, their exact walking with God; but this I have spoken of already, and therefore I come to shew you in what causes the failing of Gods people may be spoken of.

First, when private admonition will doe no good, but they remaine obstinate still, the Lord Iesus Christ saith, *Mat. 18. 15.* Tell thy brother his fault between him and thee, and if hee heare thee thou hast wonne thy brother, if hee heare thee not tell it to two or three; and if he be obstinate still tell it to the Church, I pray you marke the words, our Saviour doth not bid them goe and tell scoffers and jeerers at holinesse of it, that will indeavour thereby to make God & Religion odious, but tell it to the Church that they might come under the Censure of Excommunication, untill such time as they acknowledge their fault, and give satisfaction to the godly concerning the crime; for let a thing be never so true of a child of God; they that will speake of it so, as to set upon the stage to Gods dishonour,

our, the disgrace of the Gospell, and the prejudice of Religion; truly it is a signe they never yet truly learned what belongs to religion or humanity either.

Secondly, in things that are too apparently evill, that is, things that are too open and manifest, that all the Country takes notice of it, then they are to be reproved openly.

Or thirdly, when the speaking of their failings make for Gods glory, and the good of Religion; In these causes the failings of the Godly may be spoken of, so as those that speake of them observe these cautions; First, that the ground of his speaking of his neighbour be not revenge, and a desire to disgrace the other partie; for if these be the grounds, though the thing they speake be true, yet their end is evill, and God will find it out and punish it, I pray see *Prov. 14. 17.* Be not thou glad when thy Enemy falls, let not thy heart joy when hee stumbles; least the Lord see it and be wroth, and turne his wrath from him to thee, if God will bring that plague upon thee that should have come upon thy Enemy, if thou haddest not joyed at his downfall; What doest thou thinke God will bring upon such, as joy at the downfall of such as are no Enemies.

Secondly, It must be spoken at a fit and convenient time, *Prov. 29. 11.* A foole poures out all his mind at once, but a prudent man keepeth it untill afterwards, that is, untill a convenient time, untill his speech may be seasonable; Words in season are as Apples of Gold in pictures of silver; and truly, such in the text, are branded with folly as nor seasonable in their talke of the failings of the Godly; but every bodie with them is alike, and all times alike for to speake of the failings of the godly; A foole poures out all his mind at once.

A fourth Use, is for exhortation; First to those that falsly accuse the people of God, my exhortation to you is to repent of this your wickednesse in time, lest you repent too late, Consider what great bills of inditement, the great God of Heaven and Earth will bring against you at the great day, when every secret Plot shall be discovered, *Eccles. 12. verse the last*, God will bring every worke to iudgement with every secret thing, whether it be good or evill, how will you be able to stand then when the Lord shall judge between thee and thy neighbour? for this Iudge he will judge according to knowledge, and righteously. Magistrates may be so corrupt as they may iustifie the wicked and condemne the Iust; and take part with the wicked against the people of God; but God will be a upright Iudge; he will judge according to righteousness between man and man, yea, he that inhibits Kings to wrong his people, *Psal. 105. 15.* Hee then will Iudge between Magistrates and his people.

Secondly, be exhorted to repent of it, so to forsake it; and because it is so bewitching a sinne, as that when a man or woman is once accustomed to it, it is a hard matter to refrain it, I shall propound to you the meanes you are to use, as ever you would avoid this sinne of slandering your Neighbour.

The first badge of God to shew thee the vilenesse of thy heart in this particular sinne; It is such a sinne as makes a man like the Devill; a sinne that brands a man or woman to be wicked, a sinne not onely against the Morall Law, but against the Law of nature; Such shew the nature of Devils, and wilde beasts, rather then the nature of men, that will falsly accuse their Neighbour and seeke the blood of their neighbour; and yet it is a strange thing to see how common this

sinne is in our dayes, people doe not account it as a sinne; and therefore there is great need to beg of God to convince thee of the wildnesse of it.

Secondly, deale by your neighbour as you would be glad hee should deale by you, *Matth. 7. 12.* Consider thus with thy selfe, would I be glad my neighbour should have dealt by mee as I have dealt by him? would I have been glad that he upon no better grounds then I have accused him of a crime, hee should have accused me of the same crime.

Thirdly, another meanes to avoid this sinne, is to avoid idlenesse; for Idlenesse is the roote of this and many other grosse sinnes; The idle person is at leisure to attend the Devils businesse; and hence it comes to passe there is so much running from house to house with tales and false reports as there is; because there are so many idle persons that are at leisure to attend upon the Devils businesse. And truly I thinke there is small reason, why any should credit what the Idle person speaks, when the Apostle exhorts the Saints, *2 Thessal. 3. 6.* To withdraw themselves from them, and in the 10th. verse flatly commands, That if there be any will not worke that they should not eat; and verse 11th. For wee heare there are some worke not at all but are busie bodies, busie in meddling with other folks matters, as *1 Tim. 5. 13;* They being Idle learne to goe from house to house, yea, they are not onely idle but praters, busie bodies; These are the fruits of idlenesse running about with tales and lies, and slanders, and therefore the way to avoid it is to avoid idlenesse.

The fourth and last meanes is, if thou wouldst not falsifie or unjustly any way accuse thy Neighbour, then search thy owne heart first, and see what is there; and so I come to the use of Exhortation in generall, as it concerns both the godly and wicked, be all hence exhorted to take heed how you receive false reports of the godly; For we must know, it is as great sinne to receive false reports as to devise them, and tell them forth, *Exod. 23. 1.* Thou shalt not receive a false tale nor put thy hand with the wicked to be a false witness. God have forbidden the receiving of a false tale, as well as the telling of it; wee use to say of thieves that the receiver is as bad as the thiefe; so the talebearer is as bad as the tale teller, may worse, for a man may be a thiefe without a receiver, but there can be no talebearer without a receiver; the hearing of false tales as well as the telling of them is abominable unto the Lord, and it is a signe that such men and women are liars and dissemblers themselves that receive false tales, *Prov. 17. 4.* The wicked heed false lips, and the liar hearkens to false lips, I pray marke who they be are so ready to receive false tales, the wicked, the liar; and on the contrary it is a marke of a child of God, *Psal. 15. 3.* He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor does evill to his neighbour, nor receives a false report against his neighbour, hee that does so and so shall be a Citizen of Sion; and one thing is not so slander or receive a slander; and on the contrary they that tell false tales, and they that delight in hearing them shall be excluded this Citie of Sion, *Revel. 22. 15.* Without shall be dogs, inchanters, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh lies, I pray marke, not onely those that make them, or those that devise them, but those that love to heare them told forth.

Truly I hope I shall need no other argument to Gods people but these two to avoid talebearers, the first is, consider such people are very destructive to a Kingdom,

some, a Towne, or a person to a Kingdome, *Ezech. 22. 9.* You finde it one of the great finnes set downe in the Catalogue; for which God would take vengeance upon them. In the one, they, saith the Lord, that carrie tales to shed blood, and as to a Kingdome so to a Towne, *Prov. 26. 20.* Where there is no talebearer strife ceaseth; it implies thus much, that where there is talebearers there is strife, strife between man and man, and many times a whole Towne at variance, and as to a Towne, so to a person, *Levit. 19. 16.* Thou shalt not goe about with tales among thy people, nor stand against the blood of thy neighbour; so that in that it seekes the blood of another, it is destructive to a person.

My second motive is, Consider what a sad sight it would be to see a child of God in a Devils habit; but you will say, how shall yee avoid hearing of tales? I answer, *Solomon* tells you how, *Prov. 25. 23.* As the North wind driveth away raine, so doth the angrie countenance the slanderous tongue; if you sharply reprove them and not hearken to them; they will soone bee weary of the trade, if they can no longer utter their ware, and the reason why there is so many of that trade, is, because they have so many merchants to put off their ware to.

I might here, if time did permit, shew how this concerns Magistrates, if Gods people may be falsely accused, it concerns them to take heed how they joyne with the wicked against the people of God; Magistrates are to justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, *Deut. 25. 1.* They ought to imitate God in Iudgement, to judge according to righteousness, and not for favour and affection; but I leave this and conclude with this word of consolation to all those that are falsely accused, *Iaies 5. 9.* Behold the Iudge standeth at the doors; Take my brethren the Prophets for a example of suffering adversitie, and of long patience which have spoken in the name of the Lord, and *Matth. 5. 11th.* Blessed shall yee be when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evill against you for my sake falsely, rejoyce and be glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

BRITISH

MUSEUM

F I N I S

THE
Skillfull Teacher.
IN
A SERMON

PRECAED
At CHILISFORD in Suffolk,

July the 16. Anno 1648.

BY ZEPH. SMITH.

2-TIMOTHY 3. 15.

*Study to shew thy selfe approved of God, a workeman that needeth
not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright.*

Luke 12. 32.

When thou art Converted, Remember thy Brethren.

LONDON,

Printed by THO: FORCET for John Rothwell, living in Pauls-
Church-yard, and are to be sold at his Shop at the signe of
the Sun and the Fountaine, in the yeare, 1648:



THE
Skilfull Teacher.

PSAL. 51. 13.

Then shall I teach thy wayes unto the wicked.



His Psalme is *Dauids* penitentiall Psalme, in which after *Nathan* came to him and reprov'd him for his sinne of murther and adultery; he confesses his sinne and petitions to God for mercy for himselfe and the Church; for himselfe to *verse 18.* And for the Church to the end of the Psalme; In the first part of the Psalme wee have his confession of his sinne, and his Petition for pardon to the 8th. *verse*; In which wee may take notice of the Prophets disease; *viz.* A wounded spirit for sinne. Secondly, that he seeke for as a speciall remedie to cure this disease, Is sinne-pardoning mercy, loving kindnesse, and multitude of mercies; The Prophet knew his sinne was great and acknowledged it to be so, and therefore hee calls for much sin-pardoning mercy, intreating the Lord to wash him thoroughly from all his sinnes, and especially from these foule sinnes of murther and adulterie.

God doth not onely wound the Spirits of his people for sinne at their first Conversion; but also if afterward they fall into sinne as did *David*, he brings them back againe through a wilderness of sorrow to comfort. *Peter* denied his Master after Conversion 3. God brings him to his comfort through the rivers of bitter teares; hee wept bitterly; and dee wee not see the like in *David*; I doe not

say their finnes after Conversion separates them from the Love of God ; for nothing can separate true believers from the love of God, *Rom* 8. 38. But though their finnes cannot separate them from Gods love, yet they may deprive them of the comfortable injoyment of the light of Gods countenance, and God ordinarily brings them through a wilderness of sorrow to the sight of it againe ; it cost them many a prayer and teare, many a sigh out of bitterness of Spirit. As *David*, who pleads for pardon of sinne, and earnestly desires God would assure him of his pardon of his sinne before he had the comfort of it ; for though *Nathan* said to him when hee cried out I have sinned ; thy sinne is put away from thee, thou shalt not die ; yet the Prophet cried out of the bitterness of his soule, and went up and downe with a heavic heart a long time before hee had the comfort of it ; as appears by his prayer, *verse* the 3th. Make mee to heare of joy and gladnesse that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce ; *Dauids* sinfull carnall joy proved the breaking of his bones, at last though sinne be sweet at the committing, yet the last that followes will be as bitter as gall and wormewood ; Well might the Prophet have said, Oh! accursed be that pleasure that ends in such paine, that procures such sorrow, and hinders me of such joy, as now a drop of it would be better to mee then a whole World ; though sin hath broke my bones, yet a drop of that joy would cause them to rejoyce —and in the 10th. *verse*, The Prophet prayes for sanctifying grace, hee doth not onely pray for pardoning grace but purging grace ; Create in mee a cleane heart, a sincere Convert will not onely desire to be justified but to be sanctified ; to be holy as well as happy, to have the power of godlinesse as well as the forme ; As if the Prophet should have said, Lord, I doe not onely desire to have my finnes pardoned but my heart purged ; my heart is filthy and polluted ; Oh create in mee a cleane heart ; — In the 11th. *verse*, He petitions for deliverance from that Iudgement that fell upon *Saul* ; *viz.* Rejection, Cast me not away from thy presence ; as if hee should have said, Lord, my predecessor *Saul* ; hee sinned against thee and thou didst reject him for a King ; and if thou shouldst reject mee, and say ; because that *David* hath done this I will reject him, he shall be King no longer ; hee shall rule the people no longer, thou wert just and righteous, but oh cast mee not away from thy presence, — then in the 12th. *verse*, He prayes for that ancient comfort he once injoyed ; Restore to mee the joy of thy Salvation, the word Restore to mee doth imple, that the Prophet once had it and now had lost it ; whence we may observe, that though sinne doe not deprive the godly of Heaven, yet it will deprive them of their joy for a time ; Sinne will bring a child of light to walke in darknesse and to see no light of comfort, as the soule shall bee constrained to say, What have I to doe any more with Idols, *Hosea* 14. 9. If these sorrowes and afflictions and horrors be the effects of sinnefull joy, What have I to doe with sinne, I will returne to my first husband, for at that time was I better then now ; Oh restore to mee the joy of thy salvation, and establish mee with thy free Spirit.

Secondly, hence wee may observe, that when a soule is sensible of the absence of the light of Gods countenance, it is restless untill God speake peace ; how restless was the Spouse in seeking after Christ, *Cant.* 3. How restless was the man, *Psal.* 88. How restless was *David* in the absence of the light of Gods

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Countenance, hee washes his couch with his teares, his moyſture was turned into the drought of Summer, he roared all the day, he bewailes his sinne, hee cries out; Make mee to heare of joy and gladneſſe, reſtore to mee the joy of thy Salvation; Hee ſets a high price upon it and accounts it better then life, *Pſal. 63.* 3. Hee promiſes that if ever God will ſpeake peace to him hee will walke more exactly for the future, as in the text, *Then will I teach transgreſſours thy wayes*; as much as if hee ſhould have ſaid, Lord, if ever thou wilt ſpeake peace to my ſoule, if ever thou wilt bring mee out of theſe ſtraites my ſinnes have brought mee into, Lord if ever thou wilt pardon my ſinne and receive mee into favour, then I ſhall be able to teach and inſtruct others experimentally, I ſhall bee a faire warning to others to avoyd the like ſinnes I have committed; and I ſhould be able to comfort others in the like diſtreſſe I am in.

Then ſhall I teach. The Scripture makes mention of the teaching of God, the teaching of Chriſt, and the teachings of the Spirit, both ordinary and extraordinary; ſo of the teachings of men, ſuch as are good or bad, ſuch as teach the word of the Lord faithfully, and ſuch as teach fantasies of their owne braine and lyes, and deluſions; Amongſt men there are two ſorts of Teachers, ſuch as are publique Teachers; and Private, that is, ſuch as inſtruct their Families and Neighbours, as occaſion is offered in the wayes of God, though not in a publique Miniſteriall way, as they, that are ſet apart for the publique Miniſterie. I finde not in Scripture that *David* tooke upon him the Office of the Priſt or Levites, and taught publickely as thoſe ſet apart for the worke; Then the Queſtion is, what hee means by teaching here, when he ſaith, *Then will I teach.* I anſwer, The Prophet *David* taught in his Family, *2 Sam. 6. 20.* He returned from dancing before the Arke to bleſſe his houſe, that was, to pray with them and inſtruct them; Secondly, as a King, occaſionally by inſtructing his Subjects as occaſion was offered, *Pſal. 40. 9.* I have declared thy righteousneſſe in the great Congregation; and thirdly, He taught as a Prophet, infallibly inſpired and moved by the holy Ghoſt to pen part of the holy Scripture. The duty of teaching lies upon every Maſter of a Family to pray with them, and Catechiſe them, and inſtruct them in Gods wayes, according to that abilitie God hath given them; though not the like duty as a King, as *David* did, or as one infallibly inſpired now as *David* was then; Neither doth this text prove as ſome groſſely imagine, that all believers may teach in a publique Miniſteriall way; for if all be Teachers, Who ſhall be taught? But the ſenſe of the text runnes thus; then, if God will reſtore to me the joy of his Salvation, and bring mee out of theſe ſtraites, then I ſhall according to my place experimentally ſhew to others how bitter ſinne is, and how good God is in pardoning ſinners, according to the expreſſion of the Prophet, *Pſal. 66.* Come all yee that feare the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoule.

In the text wee have *Dauids* promiſe, and *Dauids* Prophocie; his Promiſe, then will I teach; his Propheticke, and ſinners ſhall bee converted unto thee; or here is the duty hee binds himſelfe to performe, and the ſucceſſe hee promiſes to himſelfe, that which wee are to inſiſt upon, is the duty which the Prophet binds himſelfe to performe, in which conſider firſt that it was, — *Teach.*

Secondly, the Doctrine, he will teach — *the wayes, that is, Gods wayes.*

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Thirdly, the persons he will teach, ——— the wicked.

Fourthly, the time when hee will teach, ——— then will I teach; that is, when God speaks peace to him, and restores to him the joy of his Salvation, then hee will teach others; from whence in the first place wee learne this point of Doctrine. That those persons whose spirits God have wounded for sinne, and afterward restored to comfort are best able to teach and instruct others: Then will I teach; as if he had said; then shall I be able to teach from my owne experience. It is those that are taught themselves are best able to teach others; Thou that teachest another saith the Apostle, teachest thou not thy selfe? A man that is not might himselfe, nor able to teach himselfe is not fit to teach others: When thou art converted saith Christ to Peter, strengthen thy Brethren, Luke 22. 32. As if he should have said, Peter, when thou hast experience of Gods goodnesse thy selfe, thou wilt be able to teach others; then strengthen thy weake Brethren. Those that God hath brought under the terrors of Conscience, they knowing the terror of the Lord will from their owne experience acquaint others with it, 2 Cor. 5. 11. And they having comfort from God are best able to comfort others; Who comforteth us saith the Apostle in all our tribulations, that we might be able to comfort others, 2 Cor. 1. 4. As much as if hee should have said, untill a man have experience of Gods goodnesse himselfe, hee will not be able to comfort another; and the experience of Gods goodnesse makes a man able from experience to comfort others; therefore God comforts his in all their tribulations that they might be able to comfort others.

1. Reason of the point is, because such can teach others experimentally; for the Lord having opened their owne eyes, and shewed them the horrible filthinesse of sinne; what Monsters they are, how by nature they are children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3. That they have defaced the Image of God, and have the Image of Satan; that they lie in their blood and filthinesse, *Ezekiel* 16. 8. And shewed them the fountaine of Christs blood, *Zechariah* 13. 1. In that day there shall bee a fountaine opened to the house of David, and the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* to wash in, for sinne and for uncleannesse; and made them ruine to this fountaine with David, Purge me, wash mee; they can experimentally declare this to others.

Secondly, they know by experience what folly and madnesse it is to runne on in the wayes of sinne, and they can informe others of it; Paul hee had found the service of sinne a fruitlesse service himselfe, and hee appeales to others, whether they had not found it so also, as *Rom.* 6. 21. What fruit found yee in these things whereof yee are now ashamed? Those that know the folly, and madnesse, and fruitlesseenesse in the service of sinne, they can experimentally informe others.

Thirdly, they have felt the burden of sinne themselves, and they can declare to others what a pressing burden sinne is; sinne is such a burden as will sink the soule if it be not disburdened; When the weight of sinne oppressed Davids Conscience, hee cryed out, My iniquities are gone over my head; they are a burden too heavy for mee to beare, *Psal.* 38. 4. When the Lord intends good to the soule, hee layes the burden of sinne upon the Conscience; that it might runne to Christ who onely can ease it; Who also invites such to come to him,

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Matth. 11. 28. Come unto mee all yee that labour and are heaue laden, and I will ease you. Yee that labour under the burden of sinne, and erie helpe, I sinke, I perish, I perish, them Christ eases, and then they can tell their friends and Neighbourss experimentally sinne will presse the sinner, if ever God intend good to the soule here; for though some are pressed with the burden of it more then others, yet all feele the burden of it in some measure; and if they feel not the pressing burden of sinne here for their good, it will presse them to hell for ever without hope of recovery; and therefore, woe to those men and women that lesus Christ eases not of this burden.

Fourthly, they have been made sensible of their spirituall bondage, and seruitude to sinne and Satan; A man that hath been in Captivity, and made a slave to his Enemies, can tell by experience whet bondage and captivity is. We are all by nature bond-slaves to sinne and Satan; we were borne slaves and have lived slaves, a worse slavery then the Turkes or any other Nations slavery; but natural people are not sensible of it; It is those that have been made sensible of it that can best informe others about it.

Fifthly, they have tasted the bitternesse of sinne, and they can declare to others what bitter fruiis sinne brings forth; though sinne be in the mouth as sweet as honey, yet in the belly it will be bitter; afterwards it brings bitternesse; *David* found it true by experience, when hee cryed out, my sinne is ever before mee; Ever when I lie downe and when I rise up, where ever I am, or what ever I doe, my sinne is ever before me, my Conscience alwayes accuses mee. *Iob* found sinne bitter also, *Iob 13. 26.* Thou writest bitter things against mee, and causest mee to possesse the sinnes of my youth; God brought his sinne to remembrance, and his Conscience accuses him, this was bitter; thou writest bitter things against mee; Sinne will end in bitternesse; Behold! it is an evill thing and bitter to forsake the Lord, *Ier. 2. 19.* It will make the sinner to mourne in bitternesse, *Zech. 12 10.* They shall mourne for him and be in bitternesse, they may pray in bitternesse, heare the word in bitternesse, not finde one word of comfort in the Ordinances; they may thinke upon God in bitternesse; saith *David*, I thought upon God and was troubled, I prayed and my spirit was full of anguish, *Psal. 77. 3.* Though hee thought upon God and prayed to him, who is the soules life, comfort, joy, all in all, yet he was troubled; So the poore sinner may pray and be troubled, heare and bee troubled, read and be troubled, looke up to Heaven and bee troubled, thinke upon God and be troubled; Like a Mariner in a storme, when hope failes of safetie he cries out, What shall I doe? I sinke, I perish. So sayes the soule in the bitternesse of spirit, I sinke and perish, I am damned, my Conscience that is a rolle, wherein is written Lamentations, and mourning, and woe; Now I see by experience, it is an evill thing and bitter to forsake the Lord. Now that soule that hath tasted the bitternesse of sinne can experimentally teach others how bitter sinne is; A man that hath indured imprisonment; or that hath indured sicknesse can best tell what it is; A man that hath had the Pox or the Plague, and recovered it, can experimentally tell what it is. So they that have seen the plague of a hard heart, the plague-sore of sinne, they can best declare to others the bitternesse of it.

6: They have tasted of Gods goodnesse also, and they can experimentally shew

to others how gracious the Lord is, how gracious the Lord hath been to them in restoring peace to them; as they have been acquainted with the bitterness of sinne; So with the Lords coming into the soule with comfort; they can experimentally tell others Goddoth not alway hide his face; though for a time the soule may looke up to the Lord that hides his face, *Esa* 8.17. Yet he will not hide his face alwayes, though the Spouse mourne a long time after him whom her soule loveth, yet at the length she finds him, *Cant.* 3. For a moment, in my anger saith the Lord, I hid my face, *Esa.* 54. 8. But with everlasting kindnesse will I have compassion on thee; and they can declare to others how the Lord returned in mercy to them, when they were ready to sinke, when hope failed, and they were ready to despaire, as the Prophet saith in the fatherlesse finde mercy, *Hisea* 14. 4. I was saith the soule as on fatherlesse, and motherlesse, and friendlesse, and harbourlesse, I apprehended my selfe sinking downe to hell without hope or help; I see I had nothing, nor had done nothing that would commend mee to God, and yet in my despairing condition, when I said I am cast off, the Lord of his free grace found mee a lost sheep; A prodigall child that fed upon husks untill my soule was starved; and the Lord drew me to Christ, and commanded his loving kindnesse to take hold upon me, hee overcame mee and made sick of love to Iesus Christ. And now I see that Christ is all in all, the sight of God as a reconciled Father in Iesus Christ, that is, soule-satisfying comfort; one smile from the Father in Iesus Christ countervayles all the bitterness I have undergone; Now I thinke I should be able to comfort others in the like distresse, and this is the first reason; they can teach others experimentally.

The second Reason is, because they are most skillfull to minister a word in season to a drooping soule; If a man inquire the way to a place, hee that hath been at that place is more skillfull to direct him then one that either knowes it by heare-say, or by the Map; They can speake as they have heard or read, but hee that hath been there he speakes according to knowledge, hee speakes that he hath seen; A man may teach many profitable truths to others, and yet never found the power of them himselfe. I beat downe my body saith the Apostle, and bring it into subjection, least, while I preach to others I my selfe should be a castaway. Is it possible for a man to teach others and yet not bee taught himselfe; A man may preach of the Doctrine of Faith, and Repentance, and Obedience to others; As the man that directs the other the way by the Map; but hee that hath found Faith and Repentance, and walks with God, hee can teach others experimentally. They that walke in the way to Heaven are more skillfull to direct another the way, then they that direct them by heare-say; The Saints knowes what enemies and rocks and dangers are in the way to heaven, and they can acquaint others with them.

Use of the point is to informe us, that it is very necessary, that they that teach others be taught themselves. Thou that teachest another saith the Apostle, teachest thou not thy selfe, *Rom.* 2. 21. It is that man that hath groaned under the burden of his owne lusts and corruptions, and overcomes them, that is best able to teach another how to overcome his lusts and corruptions; Truly a man is not fit to teach as a Minister untill hee be taught himselfe to know God, and Christ savingly; nor fit to advise as a Christian untill hee bee taught in the Schoole of Christ;

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Christ; Were a man taught all the Arts and Sciences under Heaven, were hee able to speake with such acutenesse and Eloquence as should cause admiration in the hearers; yet all this is nothing to the saving knowledge of Iesus Christ. Paul had as good bringing up as another, yet hee counted all as drosse and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ; Arts and Sciences, and parts are necessary, but the saving knowledge of Iesus Christ is the *unum necessarium* for a Teacher; therefore it is very necessarie that they that teach others bee taught savingly the knowledge of Christ, as well as literally your knowledge of the Letter.

Secondly, it informes us, that if those that are converted themselves be fitt Instruments to convert others: then how unfit are such for the worke of the Ministry as are enemies to Conversion: Such as daube people with untempered mortar, and teach lies for truth, and crye peace, peace, when there is no peace; Such as discourage people rather then encourage them in the wayes of God, and also as bad in their let examples of drunkennesse, Sabbath profanation, uncleannesse, Idlenesse, swearing, and these yet are the men cryed up, and highly esteemed in the world; aye, but if God account them unfit Ministers, it matters not what account the world hath of them; they must needs bee very unfit to direct poore soules the way to Heaven that are themselves walking in the way to Hell; and enemies to those that walke to Heaven; Such as refuse to walke in the wayes of God themselves, and hinder as many as they can from walking in them, surely these are unfit to teach others his wayes.

Thirdly, if those whose spirits God wounds for sinne, and after restores to comfort be best able to teach others, it informes us that God does bring those soules hee intends good o through a wilderness of terrour to comfort, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speake friendly to her, *Hosea 2. 14.* The Spouse comes out of the wilderness leaning upon her wel-beloved, *Cant 8. 5.* Therefore in the next place it is for a use of direction to such as would seeke unto others in their straites; to make choyce of such Teachers as are best able to advise them as neere as they can, such as can advise them experimentally. The sick man will goe to such a Physitian as hee is perswaded is skilfull, and experienced; Wee should be as carefull for our soules, to make choice of such spirituall Physitians as are skilfull experienced men; And it renders a man or woman suspicious, when in their troubles they goe to such as will daube them up, and flatter them in their sinne, such as will prophesie peace when there is no peace; and cannot indure them that deale faithfully with them. First, consider, an unskilfull unexperienced Physitian may instead of recovering the patient make the disease more dangerous, if this bee thy soules condition it is very sad.

Secondly, consider when the Patients life or death depends upon the Physitians skill, if the Physitian want skill the patient dies: When thy soule is sick thou standest upon the brinke of eternitie, if thou goest to unskilfull Physitians thou mayst perish for ever. Iesus Christ is the soules best Physitian, the way to be healed is to goe to him, and to take Counsell of such Physitians as have been healed by him, and have learned their skill of him.

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Secondly,

Secondly, as I would advise such as are in distresse to seek to a skillfull Teacher, so also as neere as they can to one that is faithfull; If a Physician have never so much skill, if hee be unfaithfull, hee may doe hurt as well as good with his skill; then above all make sure of a faithfull Physician for the soule, one that will faithfully applie the word to thy soule suitable to thy condition, whether it makes for thee or against thee; one that will be faithfull in keeping secrets, It becomes not a faithfull Minister to disclose those secrets that wounded spirits relate to them, but rather to pierce them, and pray for them, and advise them; this is the duty of a Physician that is faithfull, and such Physicians sick soules should seek unto for advice. I Now come to the second Doctrine: Then shall I teach. Whence wee learne that when a man is once converted himselfe, hee will endeavour the conversion of others; If hee be a Minister, when hee is converted himselfe, what paines will he take to convert others; hee will pray and study, and sweat, preaching the Word in season and out of season, hee will consider Christ hath died to bring home soules to God; and shall not know whom he hath set as a watchman over soules, studie, and sweat and travell in birth, till Christ be formed in them, yea, and beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God, 2. Cor. 5. 20.

What meane the faithfull Ministers preaching the word in season, and out of season, their reproving, rebuking, exhorting; not as carnall people say the Minister beare us ill will, and therefore hee reproves us and threatens us with damnation and Iudgement; no, but because they would faine bring home soules to God; they are converted themselves, and they desire the Conversion of others; so private Christians, when God hath once converted them, they will take paines to convert others. When Christ told the woman in *John 4*. I have been the *Messias*, shee left her waterpot and water to goe call others to see Christ; When God hath converted the husband, hee will endeavour the Conversion of his wife, hee will pray for her and instruct her in the wayes of God, So when God hath converted the wife, shee will endeavour the Conversion of her husband. So converted Parents will pray for their Children, and instruct them, and endeavour their Conversion, and wish, oh that the Lord would grant that my sonne or daughter might live in his sight; and they will endeavour the Conversion of their friends and Neighbours, they will pray for them, and advise and counsell them, and mourne over them, and intice them to that which is good.

The Reason is, because saving grace will not be Idle, it will act; goodness is of a spreading nature; *Paul*, when hee was converted himselfe, see what paines he takes to convert others; hee will withhold nothing that is profitable for the good of soules. When *Agrippa* said to him, *Acts 26. 29*. Almost thou perswadest mee to be a Christian, hee said, I would to God that not onely thou, but all that heare me this day were not almost but altogether such as I am, except bonds; his desire was, that all that heard him might be truly converted; yea, hee did so earnestly desire the Conversion and Salvation of his Brethren, and Countrymen, that *Romans 9. 3*. Hee could have wished himselfe accursed from Christ, that they might have been saved. So *Jesus*, hee was converted and fol-

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lowed God constantly himselfe, and hee resolves with his Family to serve the Lord: So *Abraham* will teach his Children after him the way of the Lord, *Gen. 18, 19.* I know *Abraham* faith the Lord, that hee will teach his children, and his household after him to keepe the way of the Lord. What is the Reason goodnesse is of a spreading nature? True grace cannot in this sense bee hid; Though all be not Gold that glisters, yet true Gold will glister. Yee are faith Christ, the light of the World. A Citie set on a hill cannot be hid; True grace where it is will discover it selfe.

1. *Use.* Is it so that such as are converted themselves will indeavour the Conversion of others; then what an evident signe is it, such are not converted themselves as indeavour not the Conversion of others, but rather intise them to sinne; to Swearing, Drunkennesse, Sabbath profanation, lying, slandering; Yea, What shall wee thinke of such as are Enemies to Conversion? such as scoffe and scere at Converted people; Surely such are farre from saving Conversion. To enter into particulars, Doe we see Magistrates instead of punishing sinne, and standing up for sinne; neglect to reforme themselves, and neglect to reforme in their Families; but suffer their children and servants to lie oft, and slander and abuse the people of God; yea, it may bee to scoffe at them behinde the doore; Doe we see them instead of setting good examples set bad examples; instead of standing up for the furtherance of the Gospell hinder it what they can, by opposing godly Ministers; and pleading for ignorant foolish scandalous Ministers, swearers, pot companions, drawers on of others to sinne with greedinesse; Whatsoever their pretext is, if according to the words of our Saviour Christ, we may judge of the tree by the fruit, it is evident such Magistrates are not sincere Converts.

So such Ministers as daube people with untempered mortar, flatter them in their sinne, gad the hearts of the righteous, and strengthen the hands of the wicked; teach not the people the difference betwixt the holy and prophane, according to *Ezekiel 44. 23.* Persecute the faithfull Ministers of the word; and instead of exhorting people to pray in their Families, and to read the word, scoffe and deride at them that doe; sure such Ministers are not sincere Converts, for if they were converted themselves they would endeavour the Conversion of others.— So such private persons as neglect prayer in their Family, reading of the word, instructing the soules committed to their charge in the wayes of God, are content to venture their owne soules, their Childrens soules, and servants soules under a soule-starving Minister. It is evident these are not sincere Converts; for if they were truly converted themselves, they would set up the worship of God in their Families, they would desire the Ordinances of God in the puriny; As new borne babes they would desire the sincere milke of the word; that they might grow thereby, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* They would inquire where Christ feeds his flocks at noone time, *Mat. 1. 7.* They would cry with *David*, How amiable are thy Tabernacles oh Lord God of Hosts, my soule longeth, yea, and fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God; And I had rather bee a doore keeper in the house of God then to dwell in the tents of the wicked, *Psal. 84.* They would bee carefull of their owne soules, and the soules of their Family.

2. *use*; If converted persons will endeavour the Conversion of others, it informs us that there is very few converted now adayes; Where shall wee find them that endeavour the Conversion of others. Look e amongst great men, such as are in eminent places; Doe not the Scripture say, Not many high, nor many mighty, nor many noble are called; And doth not our Saviour say, The Myſteries of the Goſpel are hid from the wiſe, and underſtanding in the world, *Matth. 11. 25*. And is it not written, that builders laid aſide Chriſt the corner ſtone, *Acts 4. 11*. How few men in eminent places ſtand up for God. Where ſhall we find converted Magiſtrates, and converted Gentlemen now adayes? If this be their Character to ſeek the Conversion of others. So how few Converts ſhall wee find amongst Miniſters now adayes. Where are they that pray and ſtudy, and preach, and ſwear to convert ſoules? And that mourne for the obſtinacy of the people, when they ſee their Miniſtery convert not ſoules to God, as *Jeremiah* did. *Ier. 13. 17*. If for all this yee will not heare, my ſoule ſhall weep in ſecret for your pride: And my eyes ſhall run downe teares, becauſe the Lords flock is carried away captive; Whether they would heare or no, the Prophet will mourne for their obſtinacie and hardneſſe of heart; So when a faithfull Miniſter is diligent to preach the word in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, dividing the word of truth aright, with a deſire to bring home ſoules to God; And yet the word proves a hardning letter; It makes them goe up and downe mourning with the Prophet, I have laboured in vaine, I have ſpent my ſtrength in vaine, the bellows are burnt, and the lead is conſumed in the fire, and the Founder melteth in vaine; for the wicked are not taken away, reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them; becauſe the Lord hath rejected them; But where ſhall we finde ſuch Miniſters; Now wee may find many, pervert people; Some with their corrupt Doctrine; ſome with their flatteries and prophaneneſſe; but where ſhall wee find ſuch as goe about the worke in good earneſt, to endeavour to convert ſoules to God. Truly, when wee looke abroad amongst the watchmen of our time, I feare wee ſhall finde but few ſuch. Some few there are I am perſwaded, make it their endeavour to convert ſoules, that ſtudie to approve themſelves to God, workmen that needeth not to bee aſhamed; Theſe are ſo farre I am confident from taking offence at what I ſay now, that they rather groane under their burden, and mourne for the lukewarmeneſſe and prophaneneſſe of many of the watchmen of our time; for if this be a Character of a ſincere Convert, to endeavour the Conversion of others. How few of the watchmen of our time are ſincere Converts. So, amongst the ordinary ſort of people, where ſhall wee find ſincere Converts? As for the moſt part of people, they ſcarce have a forme of godlineſſe; but are ſuch as lye in groſſe prophaneneſſe, or ſuch as are but meer groſſe Civilians. And to come to profeſſours, the Scripture ſaith, many of them have a forme of godlineſſe and deny the power; Me thinks my heart hath laine like a ſtone in me; many times when I have tooke notice of ſuch as have been glorious Profeſſours, yea, eminent bright ſtarres to the view of the World; When I have taken notice how little Religion they have had in their Families, how little reading the word, or praying in their Families at any time; Some neglecting morning duties; ſome neglecting morning and evening both; and

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done no more for their Children and servants then they have done for their beasts, provides for their bodies for the day, and let their soules sinke or swimme; It hath often made mee thinke of the Prophet *David*, how he hath cryed out in *Psal. 125.* Help Lord, for there is not a godly man left; A faithfull man who can find faith the wise man. How few are there set up the worship of God in their Families? Where shall wee find Husbands mourning over their unconverted Wives, and wives mourning over their unconverted husbands? and parents mourning over their Children, and servants that miscarrie; as *David* did for *Abson*, when he cried out, Oh! my sonne *Abson*, my sonne, my son, *Abson*: Would God I had died for thee my sonne, my sonne; Where there is true Conversion, there will bee an indeavour to convert others: and therefore it is to be feared there is but a few sincere Converts now a dayes.

3. *Psa.* is for examination, Let us trie our selves, whether or no wee be converted our selves; Doe wee indeavour the conversion of others? How does it concerne all sorts of people to come and weigh themselves in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and inquire into their conditions; What fruits of Conversion apperes in mee as a Magistrate, as a Minister, as a Master of a Family? How doe I indeavour the Conversion of others? what care have I of my owne soule? my Childrens soules, and Neighbours soules; and how doe I mourne for them that remaine obstinate? Doe I wish *Los ves* for the abominations of the place where I live; And complaine with *David*; Woe is mee that I am constrained to dwell in *Mefch*, and inhabit in the tents of *Kedar*; If thou be a true Convert thus it will be with thee; It is very remarkable, the example of the Thiefe upon the Crosse, hee was converted at the last houre, and that very houre, or part of an houre, his grace discovered it selfe, hee sought the Conversion of the other thiefe, as you may see in *Luke 23. 40.* And the truth is, true grace will discover it selfe. When a soule hath once tasted of Gods goodnesse, and free grace in Iesus Christ, it cannot but desire that others might taste it. Oh! that my husband, my wife, my sonne, my daughter, my Neighbours; oh! that their soules might live; Let us examine our selves, is it thus with us.

Secondly, if wee be converted our selves, wee rejoyce at the Conversion of others. The converted Magistrate will joy to see the Gospel flourish, and the Kingdoms of Heaven suffer violence; The converted Minister will rejoyce to see Christ formed in his Auditors, and to see them walke in the ways of the Lord; The wife will rejoyce at the husbands Conversion, and the husband at the wives, and Parents at their Childrens Conversion; there is joy in Heaven for one sinner that is converted, *Luke 15.* But if wee be such as never regard our owne soules, nor the soules of others; Such, as instead of endeavouring the Conversion of others, pervert them; doe what in us lie to hinder it; are ready to envie any looke Heaven-ward; Doe what in us lye to nip the buddings of grace in the head at its first blossoming in others; or are wee such as regard not the soules of others, let them sinke or swimme. I proclaime from the God of Heaven this day, bee they what they will, either Magistrate, or Minister, or Governour of a Family; they are not sincere Converts, and dying in this condition, they must expect nothing but damnation; for, except they be converted they

shall never enter into the Kingdoms of Heaven, as our Saviour Christ saith, *Math. 18. 3.* Except a man be converted, and become as a little child, hee shall not enter into the Kingdoms of Heaven; So that we must looke for a change, or never looke to come in the Kingdoms of Heaven. Mee thinks the hearing of this Doctrine should make our bloud runne coole in our veines, that have never yet to this day regarded our owne soules, nor the soules of others; that if wee were true Convertes our selves, wee would indeavour the Conversion of others; but I hasten to a use of exhortation.

Is it so, that converted Christians will indeavour to convert others; Then all you that have tasted of Gods goodnesse in this particular, in whom the Lord hath wrought this worke of saving Conversion; Doe you wonder at the free-grace of God in working this worke of new Creation in you, and give him the glory of it.

Secondly, from hence take comfort, that God, that squares sinners for his awne use, did not square thee so as to cast thee away; but to bring thee to bee usefull for his glory here, and to glorifie thee hereafter.

Thirdly, walke as a changed people. And fourthly, indeavour the Conversion of others, as Christ said to Peter, When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren. Indeevour the Conversion of your new relations, and your Neighbours by praying for them, and mourning over them; and instructing of them though it be not in thy power to change the heart, yet that God that ordinarily workes by meanes, and is found in the use of the meanes, hee may be found of thee in such a way; He can carry home thy instructions with power to the soul of him, or her thou dost instruct, and make the meanes effectuell; and though thou canst doe it but weakly; yet, Who hath despised the day of small things, God can worke by the weakest meanes. Discharge thou thy duty, and leave the successe to God, and thou wilt find much comfort, and peace of Conscience in it.

FINIS.